IN THE CLAIMS:

1-41. (Cancelled)

42. (previously presented) A coupling element for decanting, filling, or emptying of containers, comprising:

a first sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining a first axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining a second axis;

a second sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining the second axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining the first axis;

said inner sides of said flank pieces of said first and second sealing strips being attachable to one another to form a seal, at least in sections, the first mounting element of said first sealing strip and the second mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent one another to form a first articulated section, and the second mounting element of the first sealing strip and the first mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent to one another to form a second articulated section;

a first articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and positioned at least partially over said first articulated section, and a second articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and is positioned at least partially over said second articulated section; and

said first axis being retained in said first inner space of said first mounting element for pivotable mounting of said first articulated section, and

said second axis being retained in said second inner space of said second mounting element for pivotable mounting of said second articulated section.

43. (previously presented) A coupling element of claim 42 wherein said first and second mounting elements of said first sealing strip and said first and second mounting elements of said second sealing strip are rounded.

44. (previously presented) A coupling element of claim 43 wherein said first and second mounting elements of said first sealing strip and first and second mounting elements of said second sealing strip comprise a radial outer circumference.

45. (previously presented) A coupling element of claim 43 wherein the first and second mounting elements of the first and second sealing strips are at least partially in the form of an annulus.

46. (previously presented) A coupling element of claim 45 wherein the first and second mounting elements of the first and second sealing strips are attachable to an outer side of the first and second ends of the flank pieces of the first and second sealing strips.

47. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 45 wherein the first and second mounting elements do not extend to an inner side of the flank pieces of the first and second sealing strips.

48. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second articulated caps have inner dimensions substantially corresponding to outer dimensions of the adjacent first and second mounting elements of the first and second sealing strips, and the adjacent second and first mounting elements of the first and second sealing strips so that when the inner sides of the flank pieces of the first and second sealing strips are positioned together the first and second articulated caps respectively enclose the respective first and second mounting elements.

49. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second articulated caps each comprise an articulated cap cover wherein an articulated axis is introduceable into said first inner space and into said second inner space.

50. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first end of the flank piece of the first sealing element and the second end of the flank piece of the second sealing element extend into said first inner space, and the second end of the flank piece of the first sealing element and the first end of the flank piece of the second sealing element extend into said second inner space.

51. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first mounting element of the first and second sealing strips comprises at least one annular section, and the second mounting element of the first and second sealing strips comprises at least two annular sections spaced apart from one another, the annular section of the first mounting element fitting between the two annular sections so as to form said first articulated section, and wherein the annular section of the second mounting element fits between two annular sections of the first mounting element to form said second articulated section.

52. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second mounting elements of the first and second sealing strips form a substantially uniform cylindrical outer surface.

53. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein said inner side of said flank piece of said first sealing strip and the inner side of said flank piece of said second sealing strip are curved.

54. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein with the inner sides of the flank pieces are flush, and at least the outer side of each flank piece having an outer curve.

55. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the inner side of at least one of the two flank pieces is profiled.

56. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein at least one elastic protuberant bar and at least one recessed groove are provided on the inner side of the flank piece of each of the first and second sealing strips substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of each flank piece.

57. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 56 wherein at least one protuberant bar is provided at least at one longitudinal edge of each flank piece.

58. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 56 wherein the protuberant bar is substantially in the form of a circle section.

59. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the inner side of the flank pieces have at least one protruding bar and at least one recessed groove between the protruding bar and an upper edge of the flank piece, and at least one recessed groove between the protruding bar and a lower edge of the inner wall of the flank piece.

60. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 59 wherein the protruding bar protrudes more strongly from the inner wall than at the lower and upper edges.

61. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein each of said flank pieces is designed such that each of the flank pieces is designed such that an end of the flexible container is positioned between the flank pieces such that an end of the flexible container is in line with upper or lower edges of each flank piece.

62. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 61 wherein the first and second flank pieces are designed to receive

therebetween a tube such that an edge of the tube is aligned with upper or lower edges of the flank pieces.

63. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 61 wherein each flank piece at the upper or lower side has a groove or a clip thereat.

64. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 63 wherein each flank piece has at one of said upper or lower side a groove and at the other lower or upper side a clip.

65. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein a first and second sealing strip at the upper or lower sides is provided with an adhesive.

66. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second sealing strips substantially correspond to one another with respect to shape and size.

67. (currently amended) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein at the inner side of each of the flank pieces an elastomer or ~~thermal plastic~~ thermoplastic elastomer segment is provided.

68. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second articulated caps each comprise first and second articulated cap halves.

69. (previously presented) A coupling element according claim 68 wherein the articulated cap halves have a lockable opening and a rounded outer surface for retaining a locking pin of a mounting element or locking bolt.

70. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the first and second articulated caps have a pre-specified open section which determines an opening angle of the first and second sealing strips in an area of the first and second articulated sections.

71. (currently amended) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the mounting elements comprise ~~thermal plastic~~ thermoplastic polymers along rounded outer surfaces.

72. (previously presented) A coupling element according claim 42 wherein at least one locking unit for fixing of a position of the first and second sealing strips is provided.

73. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein at least one removable device is provided for the use with a flexible container retained by the coupling element.

74. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 73 wherein the removable device is attachable to the flexible container.

75. (previously presented) A coupling element according to claim 42 wherein the decanting, filling, or emptying of the containers is isolated from the environment.

76. (previously presented) A docking system for filling, decanting, or emptying bulk goods for fluids to or from containers, comprising:

first and second coupling elements which are attachable to one another, each coupling element comprising

a first sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining a first axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining a second axis;

a second sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank

piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining the second axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining the first axis;

said inner sides of said flank pieces of said first and second sealing strips being attachable to one another to form a seal, at least in sections, the first mounting element of said first sealing strip and the second mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent one another to form a first articulated section, and the second mounting element of the first sealing strip and the first mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent to one another to form a second articulated section;

a first articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and positioned at least partially over said first articulated section, and a second articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and positioned at least partially over said second articulated section; and

said first axis being retained in said first inner space of said first mounting element for pivotable mounting of said first articulated section, and said second axis being retained in said second inner space of said second mounting element for pivotable mounting of said second articulated section.

77. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 76 wherein at least one of the coupling elements is attachable to a flexible container.

78. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 76 wherein at least one of the coupling elements is attachable to a flexible tubular piece.

79. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 76 wherein a holding device is provided from manipulating the first and second coupling elements, said holding device comprising:

a first unit for retaining or locking the first articulated section of the first coupling element, a second retainer unit for retaining or locking the second articulated section opposite the first articulated section of the first coupling element; and

a positioning mechanism designed such that it moves the first unit and the second unit towards and away from one another for opening and closing.

80. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 79 wherein the holding device comprises at least one axis for retaining a first or second mounting element of the first or second sealing strip.

81. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 79 wherein the holding device comprises the first or second unit having a lower or upper locating mechanism.

82. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 79 wherein the holding device is designed such that a distance moved by the first and second units towards or away from one another is limited.

83. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 79 wherein at least one suction device is provided which works in conjunction with the holding device.

84. (previously presented) A docking system of claim 79 wherein the holding device comprises at least one positioning mechanism.

85. (previously presented) A connection system for filling with or decanting bulk goods or fluids, comprising:

a substantially tubular structure with at least first and second openings;

at least edge sections of the first and second openings being flexible;

a first coupling element attachable to the first opening of the tubular structure;

a second coupling element attachable to the second opening of the tubular structure; and

the first and second coupling elements each comprising

a first sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining a first axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining a second axis;

a second sealing strip comprising a flank piece which is elastic at least in sections, with an inner side, an outer side, an upper side, and a lower side, a first mounting element on a first end of the flank piece and which defines a first inner space for retaining the second axis, and a second mounting element on a second opposite end of the flank piece and which defines a second inner space for retaining the first axis;

said inner sides of said flank pieces of said first and second sealing strips being attachable to one another to form a seal, at least in sections, the first mounting element of said first sealing strip and the second mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent one another to form a first articulated section, and the second mounting element of the first sealing strip and the first mounting element of the second sealing strip being positioned adjacent to one another to form a second articulated section;

a first articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and positioned at least partially over said first articulated section, and a second

articulated cap forming a pivot bearing and positioned at least partially over said second articulated section; and

said first axis being retained in said first inner space of said first mounting element for pivotable mounting of said first articulated section, and said second axis being retained in said second inner space of said second mounting element for pivotable mounting of said second articulated section.